

December 9. Divine Thirst

by J.R. Miller

Transcript

"Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said: I thirst!" John 19:28

Here we have the fifth saying of the Savior on the cross. It was just before the end. All things belonging to His work as Redeemer were now finished. He had suffered from thirst all the terrible six hours that He hung on the cross – but He restrained His anguish – until His task was done. Now He gave expression to His desire for drink, the only word on the cross that referred to His physical sufferings. Someone reached up to Him on a stem of hyssop, a sponge which had been moistened in the sour vinegar that stood there. It was an act of kindness and pity, and was the only mark of human tenderness shown to Jesus in those hours. We cannot but be thankful for this act of kindness which must have given slight relief to the holy Sufferer.

Earlier in the day, at the moment of crucifixion, He was offered drink which He refused. That was a stupefying potion, a deadening wine mingled with myrrh or wormwood. It was offered with the intention of dulling His senses, that He might not be conscious of His sore suffering. He refused it because He wised to preserve the clearness of His mind in the hours when He was making atonement for sin. This potion, offered now by the soldier, was not medicated wine, and was not stupefying in its effects. He needed refreshment to strengthen Him for the great final act – the giving of His soul up to God.

All the experiences of Jesus Christ which reveal human need and suffering – bring Him very near to us. Since He suffered hunger and thirst, and pain and weariness and sorrow – He is able to sympathize with us in all our human experiences. He knows what we feel, for He has not forgotten even in Heaven – what He Himself endured in His incarnation.

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